

II. CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (Previously Amended) A method of preparing naturally occurring Troponin I, which method comprises protecting free sulphydryl groups of Troponin I under reducing conditions, wherein the free sulphydryl groups are protected by sulfitolyzation.

Claim 2 (Canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer)

3. (Previously Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein sulfitolyzation comprises reacting Troponin I with sodium sulfite.

4. (Previously Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the Troponin I is expressed in a bacterial expression system.

5. (Original) The method according to claim 4, wherein the bacterial expression system is an *E. coli* expression system.

6. (Previously Amended) The method according to claim 1, which further comprises purifying the sulphydryl group protected Troponin I.

7. (Original) The method according to claim 6, wherein the Troponin I is purified by chromatography.

8. (Original) The method according to claim 6, which comprises purifying the Troponin I under non-reducing conditions.

9. ((Previously Amended) The method according to claim 6, which further comprises deprotecting the sulphhydryl groups from the purified Troponin I.

Claims 10-12 (Cancelled, without prejudice or disclaimer)

13. (Previously Amended) A method of purifying naturally occurring Troponin I, which method comprises subjecting Troponin I comprising sulphhydryl protecting groups to chromatography to purify the sulphhydryl group protected Troponin I.

14. (Original) The method according to claim 13, wherein the sulphhydryl groups are protected by sulfitization.

15. ((Previously Amended) The method according to claim 14, wherein sulfitolyzation comprises reacting, denatured Troponin I with sodium sulfite.

16. (Original) The method according to claim 13, which comprises subjecting the Troponin I to chromatography under non-reducing conditions.

17. (Original) The method according to claim 13, wherein the Troponin I is expressed in a bacterial expression system.

18. (Original) The method according to claim 17, wherein the bacterial

expression system is an *E. coli* expression system.

19. (Previously Amended) The method according to claim 13, wherin the chromatography is an anion exchange.

20. (Previously Amended) The method according to claim 19, wherein the chromatography is hydrophobic interaction.